

#44 Island Park

Transcribed February 2001

Tape made on 14 October 1978 on a trip to Island Park.

Utah State University class: Theater Arts 532, Oral Traditions.

Instructors: Professors Smith and Black.

Participants from Vernal: Mike Brown; Wanda Richardson; Dorothy Green; Maida Dudley;

Ferris Hunting; Mary Wilson; Professor Black's family; Sue Watson.

Principal speakers: Narrator – Professor Black; stories by Wanda Richardson and Sue Watson.

Interviewer: Mike Brown of the Golden Age Center

Date: 17 October 1978

S = Stories

N = Narrator

S: From a place on Diamond Mountain, he saw Island Park. He saw the river and he saw the meadows and he made up his mind that that was the place he wanted. He was out looking for a place. And one time when I was a kid he was telling me that this particular point where he first moved to Island Park, here was everything he wanted, just laid out before him, and so he came back and he was getting out of the agency. He was so damn mad at the Indian agent that he couldn't take any more of him, and he was getting out of the agency.

He came back and got his father-in-law to come over to, he said, steer right. He showed him a point on the mountain that they could see from Vernal. And he said, "Steer right for that point, and when you get there, you'll know it," and that's just exactly what Grandfather did. Well, Grandfather had his sixteen-year-old son with him, and fifty years later, his son told me about it. He said that they came to that point, and he was amazed all the way from Vernal that they came right in his dad's tracks. He was the first man that ever come over here with a wagon, and he was amazed that this was just exactly where they laid out the road, fifty years before.

S: Well, I have a lot of beautiful pictures of Island Park, but with the outage last night, I didn't get time to sort them out, but maybe I could show them to you another time.

N: We'd like to see them.

S: ... was made on a map in 1902, a survey map. I had told that story over the years and I think some people believed me and some didn't. But, a few years ago I was able to obtain a map, an old map, that shows it. It was marked just like that mountain map there. So I have my proof. They had made an error on the map, and it changed the name. This was Split Mountain Canyon up here, originally, but now this is Split Mountain Canyon and that is part of...

S: It seems peaceful here, but farther down, the rapids are real turbulent.

S: Well, it looks tranquil here now, but even here in high water it isn't. It's quite swift and quite turbulent here when the river is high.

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S: The river isn't near as big as it was when I was a kid here.

N: Yes, they're controlling the water from the dam now.

S: However, you can see where the high water line was last spring. We had some real high water last spring. Here's where it was, last spring.

S: It looks like there was more on that side.

N: It was a huge river.

S: Yes, it was, in the spring when the runoff was getting in there.

S: It was when the Yampa and the Snake crested. And it was for, oh, I think it was for several days that it was up real high. I put a river trip in at ? Park at that time.

S: Now, ? Park is from here, where?

S: Well, you go to Maybell, and it's out on the Yampa River. It's known as Deer Lodge.

N: And then, what? You came down and took out down here at the Monument? How far is that? How many days?

S: It's three days. Three to four.

N: How far is it? How long does it take to go from here down?

S: Well, as low as the river is now, it would take probably four hours.

N: Down through the Monument?

S: In high water you can go through in an hour usually.

S: Oh, wow.

N: When you put in up at Brown's Park, how long does it take to go down?

S: That's usually a three-day. Some of them like to take four days and do a little more investigating,

N: Now, the Yampa puts in here somewhere, and then the two rivers flow together?

S: Yes, at Echo Park. Have you heard of Steamboat Rock?

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N: Yes.

S: They come together right at the entry at Steamboat Rock. The Yampa comes in from this way and the Green from this way, and they make almost a complete circle around Steamboat Rock.

S: It's just amazing how this river meanders around. You hit it down there in Jensen, you hit it up here, up there around Harper's Corner. It's meandering around up there. Go up through the Flaming Gorge, and see it up there.

S: I can show you about where Harper's Corner is. Do you see this point right through here that's coming out from that way?

N: Over toward Jones' Hole?

S: Yes, on beyond Jones' Hole. Right across this mountain, you can see the last point, coming out there.

N: Yes.

S: That is directly across from Harper's Corner. Harper's Corner is on the Blue Mountain side, of course, and that's on the Diamond Mountain side.

N: So, this is Diamond Mountain here?

S: This is Diamond Mountain here. Where the white rocks are is Jones' Hole, and then this mountain coming back along this way is Diamond Mountain. And, of course, Diamond Gulch drains into Jones' Hole. John Harper was a pioneer, quite colorful.

N: Did he settle in there?

S: I think he just had range there, didn't he, Maida? May have had a summer camp or something. Have you seen that?

N: Harper's Corner or the road that goes into it? Is it called Harper's Corner?

S: Yes. You go out over to Dinosaur, and go up the road there and then when you get up in Harper's Corner, there's about a mile hike and an overlook showing you the convergence of the two rivers and the big Steamboat Rock. It is one of the most magnificent sights. You should be sure and go up there.

N: Say that again, now. You go beyond Jensen, across the river...

S: Yes, you go out through the Monument.

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N: Oh, through the Monument.

S: Uh-huh. You go from the headquarters, there, the other side of Dinosaur, right up. See, it's about twenty miles from Jensen. You follow Highway 40. And there's a ranger's headquarters at Dinosaur, there, and you just follow that road up. It's a good paved road.

S: There's also an overlook right up here, where we can see better where it is, from the ranch. But it's right up on top here, and you can drive down onto this area, and you drive on out to Harper's Corner. Or you can go off into Echo Park and down right there. Drive down in there.

N: And that's all coming from the Dinosaur side of the river, the Monument?

S: By all means, you should be familiar with that because that is really something. It's worth anyone's time to take a day.

S: That Yampa country, from on top of the mountain, you can see back up over that, and it's just tremendous. It's about a mile hike from where you can park your car, out to the point, where you look. But, oh, it is really worth it, if you have time.

N: Is this a good fishing river?

S: It used to be, but it isn't now. After the dam went in, the water became so cold that our fish didn't do well down here, the catfish and the fish that had been in the river. But now that they've changed the outlet up there to bring the temperature up for them, I think they'll come back. They have been catching quite a few trout down here, though.

S: It is quite good fishing at Little Hole.

Other voice: Yes, at Little Hole. Back there, up where Red Fleet puts in, why, you catch them after the high water's down. We got out about twenty last year.

S: For sport fishing, as long as the water is down, you're fine. But when it starts to raise, you'd just as well quit and go home because you won't get another bite, right, girl?

S: There was fifty or sixty beaver, down there, and they were swimming around, and they were cutting down trees, and they were living the life a beaver lives.

N: Where is this, now? Back up and tell me.

S: No, you'll pass this place. But the thing that surprised me most the last time I was down there: there's no bank there any more. It's all washed down and just like this is around here, something like that. But I always remember that.

S: Well, they trapped the beaver out. I mean, old Galloway come in here and got hundreds of

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beaver. Hundreds of beaver.

N: So, this is more over toward Island Park?

S: Yes, this was where it happened. And of course, I was just a small child, so maybe it was seventy-five, maybe seventy-five years ago, or something like that.

S: It was here, when mother and I sat on a horse and watched the fifty or sixty or so beaver swimming around in that water. Right where they could reach the trees.

N: Gosh, that's quite an island out there, isn't it?

S: Well, now this part here is still an island. See, the river comes out of the canyon up there. It comes down around here and makes this loop, and goes back and then out around this point, and back down through the canyon.

N: I see.

S: There are some places down here where you can see more into the field. My dad had a dam across part of the river, up around the point that you can see, and he took the water out of the river there, and brought it down by gravity, down to the field. But over the years that has been let go.

N: So, where we can see that plowed field, or it looks like, right down in this corner there, that's where the home place was?

S: Yes, we'll drive down there. We'll also drive up that road that goes up on top of the hill, and you can look down on the island.

S: We'll go do that first, and then we'll go back up to my place and we'll have lunch up there.

N: Good. Oh, this is quite a sight, isn't it, up here? My! How many acres was it that the family had up in there?

S: We didn't call it acres, we called it miles.

N: OK.

S: It was from that point to this point, to that point, to this point, to that point. And you keep your damned sheep off!

S: My dad didn't have anything to do with bringing sheep in,

N: But sheep did get in.

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S: Yes, but he got some money from them, though, didn't he?

S: Well, he...

S: Don't worry. We disagree violently on a lot of things.

S: Well, it was after Sue was gone, he placed them here then.

N: Do you still own this ground here, then?

S: I have three hundred and twenty acres that I still own.

S: Is it mostly rangeland?

S: Rangeland and hideaway.

N: Yes. Well, that's worth a lot.

S: You can see it here. You can see this dugway coming around the hill here, and then this side of the dugway you can see fences going across to the lower end.

S: Oh, now, that's what you're talking about. Rangeland.

N: Wouldn't it be great to have a place down there now?

S: You could hide out down there.

N: ? hid out over in Jones' Hole.

S: Yes. His name was Jones, and he lived there for over a...

N: Now, he's the one that you told that story about with the flour. Is he the one?

S: Yes, yes, they wrapped old Bangledorf. They dumped a sack of flour along beside him, he was on a suit, or a blanket, or something like that, and then they just rolled him up in the flour and he lived, by gosh.

N: That's a story. Well, we have, say that again.

S: The graves that Aunt Sue has probably told you about are at the point of that second long ridge coming down there. Well, the longest one that comes down right through here. We'll drive over there, also.

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N: Now, the graves are from the family?

S: Yes, the one is Aunt Sue's brother, and then there is the Boren baby; some other people were over here and lost a baby.

S: The house they built in Island Park was a two-story house because there was still some danger from Indians and he thought he would stand a better chance if there might happen to be a siege, which he doubted and there never was, but he had a two-story house so he could go up and see where the Indians were located, and so on, and I don't know whatever became of that. There isn't a sign; it wasn't burned down. Did you ever know what [happened]?

S: It was torn down, honey, and most of the logs were moved up into the other house. It sat between these two washes here. See where those rocks come out to the river, and then up – you can see another wash coming in, a few hundred yards on up, and the house sat back away from the river a little ways between those two washes.

N: Uh-huh. Yeah.

S: It goes way up and comes down at that point, way over there. Yes.

S: Well, if any of you have heard of the mine, the Sage Creek Mine, which was a copper mine, it was right on the river. And right back from this Split Mountain, right at the upper end of that, that was what was called Sage Creek, that goes in there.

S: Is that the Hatch Mine?

S: No, that was the old copper mine, honey.

S: I think it was the one we called the Hatch Mine. I believe it was the same thing.

S: It may have been. I don't know. Just the Sage Creek Mine is all I've ever know of it as. They hauled ore out, and you can see the parts of terrain they had to bring it out over, and they hauled it out in wagons, with four- and eight-horse teams. They would haul it with four-horse teams until they came to these steep ridges, and then they would have to use an eight-horse team to pull it out.

S: Where did they take it, Wanda?

S: I believe it was taken to Craig, wasn't it?

S: I'm not sure.

S: Or down the river.

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S: Uh-huh. I think it was taken to Craig.

S: Did it last very long?

S: It was a very good grade of copper, but the expense of getting it out was just too great. And, of course, now, it's in the Monument, so even if there were methods that were less expensive...

S: See that road coming down over there under those trees? That was probably the ranch where those two big trees are, coming back. We'll drive down there so you'll be able to see.

N: Oh, it's just behind that, kind of, where the house was.

S: Yes. I remember it was dangerous. It was a bit low in the later part of the year.

S: It still is very high and very dangerous. But to hold back the high water, that was one reason why Father Escalante was able to cross where he was, down there where I showed you last Saturday, because at this time of [year], September, he crossed in September, it was quite low, and so by following the old Indian fords, he was able to make a crossing.

S: Here, again, you can see the water line, where the high water was last spring,

N: Well, and that sandy area has obviously had water in it earlier.

S: You bet. Oh, yes, it was such a lovely piece.

[Many voices speak at once]

N: Well, I'm kind of surprised they don't make a state park out of it or something.

S: Because of the Monument.

N: Oh, I see, it is a part of... I see.

S: The ? ground there is Fish and Game.

N: I see, that's what...

S: But most of it is Monument.

N: I see.

S: Well, shall we –

S: I love these trees.

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S: These are the trees she talked about.

Unidentified voice: By darn, how did they get it all in here?

N: Now, say that again.

Unidentified voice: How could they build up in here?

S: Well, they built way down, oh, three quarters. Let's ask Wanda how far down it was. I think it was three-quarters of a mile or something, maybe half a mile down that way. And there is a lovely big grove of big trees, and Mother insisted on having the house built down there. Well, all the work was up this way, and they didn't have any automobiles to jump into in those days. If you go out and catch a horse, it would take as much effort as to walk, and so they were too darned far from the work. And so one time Dad built an old log cabin in here, just threw something together, so when the spring work was going on, and there was so awfully much to do, the men wouldn't have very far to walk. Well, Mother came, and she moved in, and it was a lot less work here than in the other house, even for her, and so that's when they started building here. And there have been three or four houses here. Wanda's dad built a house that was much nicer than this. And this one was built just recently by some people who were interested in the place.

S: That tree.

N: Oh, I'll bet that tree has been here about as long as you can remember, hasn't it?

S: It was a big tree as long as I can remember. It was a big, old, tree, as far back as I can remember. I mean, the cowboys used to take their used horseshoes, and they'd heat them and pound them straight, and put a hook on one side, and drive them in there, and they could hang their saddles or their harnesses, or anything like that. As I remember that tree, when I was a kid, there was always saddles and harnesses, and blankets and so on, hanging around it.

Unidentified voice: You can still see some of them, sticking out here.

N: That's great. Yeah, I think I can see some sticking out of that tree.

S: It's a beautiful old tree. I love it.

N: In your book there's a picture of you by a big old tree. Is that it? Oh, for heaven's sakes.

S: Uh-huh. Yes, they brought me over here, specially to get my picture beside that tree.

N: Well, it's a beautiful picture, too. It was well worth it.

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S: Well, Jack is a wonderful photographer. He's really good, and Mrs. Thacker is the one that got me to write the book in the first place. She met me on the street one day, and she was a new neighbor, I didn't know her. I knew who she was when I saw her, and she said, "Why don't you gather all your poems up and get them into a book?" I had taken a course that she was teaching, and I said, "Who the heck would bother with the tripe that I write?"

Her husband just loved it, he loved the awful stuff that I put out, and his wife, she'd write beautiful poetry, just like the old poets, you know. His wife would write beautiful stuff, and he couldn't stand it, he just couldn't stand it. But this, with the hells and the damns and all that sort of thing, he just loved that. So, I thought, "Well, well. Maybe."

We had to plunk down \$1500 before the publisher would even look at it. And so, we said, well, when we get our money out of it, that would be \$1500, we'd take a trip to Hawaii. After the book came out, it was only about three months before we took that trip to Hawaii.

N: Wow. Gee.

S: It didn't sell like that very long, but nevertheless, it did take the three of us to Hawaii and back.

N: Wonderful. It's a beautiful book. Did someone out here publish it?

S: No, we had to have it published in Provo. We could have had it done in Salt Lake, but somebody else, Mr. Bullock, who lived up the canyon, he had published a book of poems, and he had published in Provo, so we did too.

N: Well, it's well done. It's a beautiful book.

S: Yes, it is. It's a beautiful book. And there was so many things that I threw away, that I wish now I had put in the book. Are you all Mormons?

S: Well, yes.

N: Yes, mostly, I guess.

S: Will you be mad at me if I say something?

N: No, not anything you could say...

S: Let me see. I licked more Mormons when I was a kid than Johnson's Army ever did. My dad was the only man in Vernal, we were the only family that were non-Mormon in Vernal, until I was grown up almost, and so that was what the kids always threw at me at school. "You ain't a Mormon." If they said, "You ain't a Mormon," them was fighting words. So I got good at it. And if they'd say, "Ain't you a Mormon?" that was just as bad. I'd pound them for that, too.

N: Well, I see you survived. More than probably any of them.

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S: I did. I survived them all. Anyway, most of them.

S: Wanda's a very devout Mormon.

[Other voice, question –] ... that are still standing?

S: Well, those were some that were put in long after my dad was here. Our haystacks and barns and stuff of that sort is out that way, and not very far from the river. Well, anyway, the Fairchild family, this girl married a buffalo hunter, and he was a rough and tough and a son-of-a-gun of a man, and she had a heck of a life with him. Well, when she was expecting her baby, she came back to her mother, and after the baby was born, she wouldn't go back to old Jones. And he begged and pled, and he really loved her, but he didn't know. He just treated her like one of the boys, you know, and that wasn't to her liking, exactly. So, anyway, he came in one morning and he was just furious, and when she saw him coming, she knew he was mad, so they had a corn-crib, and she dragged the boys—she had some boys from her former marriage—and she got them all in this corn-crib, and locked the door from the inside, and he went screaming around with his gun in his hand, his pistol and so on and so forth, and everybody was frightened to death of him. That was when Bangledorf was the hired man, and he came to help Jean, that was the woman, that this guy was married to, and so... How the devil did that go?

N: Well, he tried to help her.

S: He tried to help her, and so Bangledorf, this guy, jumped onto this poor old Jones, and just beat the tar out of him for no reason. And stabbed him and stabbed him and stabbed him. And that's when they wrapped Jones up in the flour.

Other voice, unidentified: I think it was Bangledorf.

S – Yes, and that's when they wrapped old... When Grandma Fairchild got a hold of him, after the fracas was over, they wrapped old Bangledorf in this suit with the flour around it, you know, and he lived. He had wounds where the blood was just gushing. Mother didn't dream he would ever survive. Well, Jones left hell for leather. Oh, and he grabbed one of the babies. He wanted Jean to come back to him, and when she wouldn't... They had put the two babies down sleeping, and Dad's baby was a boy, and Jones' baby was a girl. He grabbed up one of the babies and lit out hell for leather, out over the road we come out this morning, and Dad met him, caught up to him.

Mother went squalling down the lower forty, where Dad was cutting hay, and he got a horse out of the team, right quick, and jumped on the horse, and he went hell for leather after Jones, and when he caught up with him, he said, "What in..." And he cussed him out and he said, "What do you want my boy for?" And old Jones said, "Your boy?" And they undressed the baby and proved that it was Dad's boy instead of his girl. Well, anyway, Dad took his baby back, and that's the last they saw of Jones for a long time.

The next spring, Uncle Ed, who was only about sixteen then, Mother's brother, was

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taking some cattle. They took them over that trail. You can see that trail up there that goes over to Jones' Hole. When he got to Jones' Hole, he thought he saw something.

BEGIN SIDE TWO:

S: They were waiting for him when he came back to Vernal, so that was that.

S: It wasn't a murder, after all.

N: But he'd been living out up in there for how long?

S: He'd been living up there for – oh, well, from sometime this summer until sometime next summer.

N: And that's how the place got its name.

S: Yes. That's our version, and we stick to it. But every other man whose name is Jones has tried to prove that it was somebody else. But that's the one that was first named that.

S: And here in Island Park, my mother and Wanda's dad was born. He was the only baby that was born in Island Park. And mother had so awfully much milk. She was just oozing, and it was painful, it was terribly painful, and they just didn't know what to do. She wasn't able to ride to Vernal in a wagon at that time, and oh, I don't know all that. Well, old Sam Galloway came along. Sam Galloway was an old trapper and hunter and so on, and his brother was born the first day of April. I say that because the deer have their babies in the spring. He got a baby deer, and took it home, and the baby deer took care of the situation very nicely.

N: Is that right?

S: And so, that was Wanda's dad. And let me see, what else did I want to add to that?

N: That is quite a story, right there.

S: I think it was just a story. Well, mother said that the little deer probably slept all night, because he never bothered her in the night. But just at the first crack of dawn, the little deer would be right there, wagging his tail, and going after his breakfast, and he knew where to find it.

Other voice, unidentified: Oh, my, that's precious.

N: Yes.

Other voice, unidentified: Now, we wouldn't... I think some people would... Do you believe that? I just wonder how, you know, nature took care of things.

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N: Well, they had to.

S: Well, the little deer took care of things then. And the affection that she had for that baby deer was unbelievable.

S: Oh, she did. She loved him dearly. And he grew up and went off with the herd one day, and he never came back.

S: Oh, I forgot to tell you about the big tree. My brother Art, when he was eleven years old, he... Now, this is the last one I'm going to tell you till later. She's got to feed us.

N: OK.

S: Mother got a toothache, and she was so unreasonable that she insisted that Dad go with her, over to Vernal, to have this tooth taken care of. Art was just as disgusted as he could be because he saw no reason why Mother shouldn't jump on her horse and go over to Vernal, it's only thirty miles. It would only take her about ten hours. Anyway, so they went, and during the night Brother was wakened up by the squealing of the pigs, and he knew that whatever creature was after them, there were lions and bear and deer, lots of deer, and lots of other things.

N: Hang on. There.

S: Thank you. Now, what was I telling you?

N: He heard this noise in the night.

S: Oh, yes. Dad's house was down where it was, you know, and a little ways down in the valley, was a house for the hired man and his family, and he had about ten kids, and they were all boys. Some of them were, of course, pretty well along toward being men. Art went down to see what should be done about all these pigs squealing and all that kind of thing, and so when he got down there he heard the awfulest noise. He said it was just like a roar, everybody screaming. Old John was cussing, and Judy was screaming at the top of her lungs, and all the kids were yelling according to their lung power.

So he ran around to peek in the window, to see what the heck was up. And here was all the kids, they had flippers, or sling-shots, or any kind of weapon. The older boys had their twenty-twos and old John had his gun in his hand, and little Judy was standing there with her long, heavy underwear on. She had an arm out on each side, but she was stopping them, because they didn't dare touch Judy. Even the husband, who was screaming and yelling, right in her face, that he had to get out there, she wouldn't let him out, because she was afraid some of her precious men would get hurt.

And so, now, where do I go from there? There is a nice ending to it. Oh, anyway, Art got disgusted. And he said, "To heck with them." So he came on back to the house and got his own gun, and went looking for whatever it was. He went down along the pasture fence, and he heard his dogs. There were a couple of hound dogs, and they were down to the river, just making an

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awful noise. Suddenly the hound dogs began making a different kind of noise, and he knew that the hound dogs were chasing something. So he waited there by the pasture fence. Oh, and he thought about the wrangle horses that they had tied up, and that had to be turned loose if there was any kind of violence around, like lions or wolves or anything, so he ran and turned the wrangle horse loose, and then he was back where his gun was, and here came this creature. I

    t was going about fifteen feet to the lunge, and the dogs were right behind, "Yip-yip-yipping." They were all out of breath, and scared to death, but they were still chasing it, and it came and it went up that tree. And Art went, he told me this himself, he said that he went and he stood right under it. He said this thing was up the tree looking down, and he stood right under it and took aim, and shot it in the sticking place. And the sticking place is that little light, you know, and there are things there at his feet. Just about that time old John came and, of course, when he heard the shots, he and the whole durn bunch of them came screaming and yelling, and old Judy trailing along behind them. But the men got there before Judy did, and they were all looking in wonder at this mountain lion that my brother had killed, and so on, and finally he said, "Frank, you go and put some ? on that dog's scratches." The dogs had tangled with the lion, and he'd gouged them in several places. And [to] some other boy, "You go and do this, and you go and do that." Finally, old John, the father, he said, "And what, my lord, would you have me be a doin'?" And he said, "Go feed the hogs. A man that lets a woman boss him ain't fitting to skin lions."

S: That's the line. It made it.

N: Well, my gosh, and that's the tree.

S: That's the tree.

N: Well, that's seen a lot of history, hasn't it?

S: And I'm the narrator. But people in Vernal call me something else besides that, but I still maintain I'm just a narrator.

S: She's not lying about it.

S: I'm telling my version.

N: Sure. It's a good version, too.

S: Isn't that amazing, that it's still so alive. It's [the tree] still growing.

N: Yes, it's a pretty good story.

S: Oh, why didn't I bring my tape and my tape-line? We measured that and it was twenty-six feet around it and we measured it the next year, and it was twenty-seven feet around it.

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S: Oh, you mean it's still growing around?

S: Yes, I think it's still growing. You measure ten feet up from the ground.

S: It's alive.

N: It's very much alive.

S: Yes, it's alive. If you look right up here, there's a brand new branch that's four or five feet long. It's a very new –

N: I can see. It's a very new one.

S: See, so it's definitely growing.

S: I love this tree. I wish it was right in my front yard.

[The taping stopped and was started sometime later.]

N: You can't see the tunnel from here, can you?

S: You could if we were up the river a little ways, I think, maybe, you could still...

N: Because it is still there, it hasn't caved in or anything.

S: Well, it is filled in, back farther, but there is a little opening there.

S: Well, after the tunnel was started, Dad started to cutting on the other side, the other side of the hill, and they were still working on the tunnel on this side of the hill. When they came together, they were only about something like six inches off or something like that.

N: Good gosh, that's amazing.

S: We thought that for men that didn't have any particular education, we thought that was pretty good engineering.

N: Well, what was the purpose of the tunnel?

S: To get water on the other side of the river where it would be...

S: The river was much higher than it is now. I mean, it was up higher.

N: Well, on the other side does it drop down?

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S: Do you remember when you were up there, you looked at this ridge coming down, and there was a big meadow down this way, and then there's another big meadow over here. We used to put up hay on the other side of the river. And this was to water that area, to make the ground more productive.

N: How would they get the water from the river through the tunnel?

S: Well, it ran higher here.

N: Oh, I see.

S: And then the river got cut down more.

N: Now, your father was digging from one side, and who was it that was digging from the other side?

S: A gang of men that dad hired.

N: Oh, I see.

S: And he went around to all the mines in the spring, when the miners, you know, had been digging coal all winter. How many mines have we got around Vernal? Several, didn't we?

S: Well, I don't know how many there were at that time.

S: Well, anyway, and he hired those men for the summer, when they would have been out of a job otherwise.

N: I see.

S: And, so, he started a bunch digging. Well, this three hundred feet of solid rock that he dug through, that was pretty well through. That was half finished when he started to dig on the other side. It was mostly an open cut on the other side, and not very much blasting and that sort of thing.

N: Well, did it work? Did they get water?

S: Yes, it worked for a number of years until the river probably washed the bed deeper, so they couldn't get it.

Other voice, unidentified: Build a dam across it.

S: Well, they could have built a dam across it, but...

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S: The river went through in extreme high water, but not long enough in a year to... If dad had stayed some more years in this place, if he'd have been younger or something of that sort. But when he was getting along toward being an old man, he had an opportunity to get a place smaller, and so he left this to the kids.

N: I see. Well, that's a remarkable thing to even think of doing, seems to me.

S: Well, the place was sold to someone else for quite a while, to some people from Brown's Park, and then when it was surveyed and came on the market, then my father purchased it from the state. And Aunt Sue's husband, who was the state land inspector at that time, was instrumental in helping him to do it, to get the ground back. That was in 1915. And it's been in the family ever since. Of course, the state fish and game guys still have some of it.

Other voice, unidentified: How long have they owned it? The Fish and Game ?

S: From '58 or '68. Twenty years.

S: I feel very different about that. I'm very bitter against the Fish and Game because for many years they would not do anything with it. The ditches all went, the house went, everything went. They did nothing, absolutely nothing, to protect it.

N: That's too bad.

S: We tried to lease it. We tried to lease it on a cash lease; we tried to lease it on a share lease; and they wouldn't even lease it. We finally got a new administration in, and then they started leasing it out, so now it is coming back. They're doing something with it.

N: That's too bad, though.

S: But, it is too bad. It's too bad that all that was lost. If an individual had had it, they would have kept the place in good repair. It would have been a place of beauty, instead of going downhill the way it did.

N: Well, you'd think that they would want to protect it. That's one of the reasons I thought they were there.

S: Well, that's the reason they bought them, and they have defeated their own purpose.

N: Oh, that's too bad.

[The taping stopped and was started sometime later.]

S: Oh, Alf Johnson. Oh, yes, Alf Johnson. I remember him.

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N: Well, now, how early did he come? Was he one of the early ones?

Other man's voice, unidentified: In '75 with cattle. Actually, this was cattle country, and so he came out here with a bunch of cattle, from Parley's Canyon. It's where he came from, down in Salt Lake. He brought, him and two others, brought the cattle out here, in the spring of 1875, and then my dad, after they got settled here, he looked over Ashley Valley, and then he went back to Salt Lake, and one of the men stayed there to take care of the cattle, through the winter.

N: I see.

Same unidentified voice as previous: And then two years later, in 1877, Uncle Jim Henry and my dad went towards southern Utah, to see what southern Utah was like. The farther south they went, after being in Ashley Valley... They went back to Salt Lake. They just got there for the April conference, and while they were in conference, right after conference, John Taylor called my dad on a mission to come to Vernal and settle Vernal. So he and this there Jerry – I can't think of his name, I will, they talked about giving this other guy credit for it. Him and three others. My grandpa Black came out here. Started to Vernal.

N: Your grandpa's name was what?

Same unidentified voice as previous: Grandpa Black; Vaughn Black was one of his boys.

N: I wonder if we're related?

Same unidentified voice as previous: And then, on the way out, it's a long story, about what an awful time they had coming out, on this kind of a trail, you know, coming out here. I think they were about three weeks, Mother said, coming from Salt Lake to Vernal. And then right after they got here, they stopped right off Eighth West, there, and this was on that box across the road. Right by Eighth West there was where they first stopped and they built a little one-room house right there, with a dirt floor. Right then is when he started building out in the country there.

Other unidentified voice: What year was that?

Same unidentified man's voice as previous: That was the spring of 1877. And they had quite a time crossing the Duchesne. There were no bridges or anything. They'd just unhitch the horses and find a place where a horse could swim across, or they could ford it, and then they'd come on right down through Duchesne, and then on to Vernal. Being here, he knew the valley.

N: Because he'd been here before.

Same unidentified man's voice: Because he'd been here before. And so, then soon after he got here, my grandmother, Mrs. Black, died, and so Grandpa Black was a casket maker anyway, that was his business, he took my dad's wagon-box and made my grandmother a casket. So she was the first lady buried on the Vernal Cemetery.

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S: I knew she was. That's on old Dr. Hullinger's ground.

Previous unidentified man's voice: Then, after that, my granddad lived until he died, right there, making caskets for the valley.

S: Yes, he did, I remember.

Previous unidentified man's voice: Then, my dad got I.J. Clark to hold the plow for him, and they went to the mouth of Ashley Canyon, there, and they plowed two plow furrows right straight down to our homestead. Right to where I live now. Then the next year was when the people started. There were several Merkleys and Hackings, and those people came in in 1878. Then one of them would tie onto this canal, and one of the Merkleys went south, and the Hackings went north, and right below our place on Vernal Avenue, the Hatches came in, and they took the water right from my dad's ditch, to Hatch Town. They called it Hatch Town then. Then people went on down to Naples. Each one would make the ditch a little bit bigger. But he did that without a surveyor, or anything.

S: Yes, the same as my dad put that hole through the hill over there.

Previous unidentified man's voice: But then, he located right there on the east side of Main Street. Vernal Avenue up to Eighth West was his homestead. The homestead. On the east side of Main street.

S: Now, that was your grandfather Black, was it?

Previous unidentified man's voice: No, that was my Dad. My Dad was the one that located there. He was the one that was out here before.

S: So your Dad came out before your grandfather did?

Previous unidentified man's voice: Oh, yes, my dad came out with the cattle two years before. And two years later, in 1877, was when he moved out. He moved out here to Vernal. Then he was called on a mission. He did everything he could to build up the country. He brought the first sawmill in here. He brought the first balers in and he's the one that brought the lumber for Fort Duchesne when it first came in here. And the mill was up on Dry Fork, you know, up in Dry Fork settlement. He took the contract for building Fort Duchesne, from his lumber, and I remember my mother telling, she said, right here on this old machine, there, the captain came over and paid for that lumber, he got five thousand bucks of gold he paid my dad for that lumber. He got twelve dollars a thousand for that lumber.

N: Wow, that was a fortune in those days, wasn't it?

S: Yes, it was a fortune. And another thing, any other place he might have worked, he might have

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got a leg of deer, or a leg of beef, or a half a hog, or something like that. There was very little money in the country and the government was the only one that had any.

S: Oh, look at that old island.

N: Wow!

Previous unidentified man's voice: I'm kind of upset now, I forgot where to start.

N: Well, you were just telling about what your father had done there. It was a very significant figure.

Previous unidentified man's voice: In these talks they had, they never mentioned my dad's name when they were talking about Vernal, so that's the reason I got up in that meeting and said what I did.

S: Well, good, I'm glad you did.

N: I'll say.

S: Well, a lot of people have tried, but they can't get up there. There's too many steep – too many straight up and down.

S: I don't know, I wish somebody would go up there and go through.

N: Now, tell us. Your father had a lot of dealings up in this upper end, then, huh? Cattle, and so on?

S: It was all one ranch.

N: I heard you say once that they spent a little more time working up in this end than they did down on the bottom there.

S: Well, yes, they did. But that would be down where the ranch proper [was]. You see where they took the ditch out, just right up around this next bend. And that was always a pain in the neck, because it was always washing out. Every time we'd have a flood, it would wash the ditch out and they'd have a lot of work to do and there was never anything they could do about it.

S: When I look at this land, I see it peopled, I see it cattled, I see the horses and everything else that you people are not looking at.

N: No, I wish we could see it that way, but we can imagine. I suppose it was pretty rugged back in that time, wasn't it?

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S: Yes, probably more trees. I don't know, maybe there wasn't, but we took the ditch out way up here, out of the canyon. My mother and dad, somebody gave them a boat, I think it was Sam Galloway.

N: She wants us to move down just a little. Take hold of my arm, we'll just step right down here.

S: She said for me to stay right where I was.

S: No, all of you step down.

S: Oh. I really think it was over against here. I'd have to ask Wanda. You see, she lived here in the later years. But after she lived here, they had the men come to pump the water out. But my daddy had to get a gravity ditch. And there's a big wash up there, where the water's running off from the hill, off Blue Mountain, it made some terrific floods. It was always being washed out, and they had quite a time with that, that was one of the things that they were continuously battling.

N: Which is Martha and which is Susie Rock?

S: This one on this side, this crag, the whole thing, was named Martha. And the one on that side was named Susie. And it was a government man that was the head of a twenty-man team of people who were sent out here to survey this for the government.

N: Well, that's impressive. Doesn't that make you feel good, to know that there's a monument there for you?

S: Sort of. I used to be quite stuck-up about it.

N: Oh, that's beautiful. I don't know where you'd see a more beautiful sight than that.

S: I love it. I've seen it from up on Blue Mountain at different places along there. You can come and look right down into Island Park and it's beautiful that way, too.

N: Well, it's just beautiful any way you look at it.

S: Well, it was up here someplace that we stole the boat out and pulled it up the river. That was a tremendous thing. I don't know...

N: Well, tell me about that. What happened there? When you were kids?

S: Oh, well, we were fourteen or something like that, my boyfriend was maybe fifteen, and we thought it would be very romantic to pull a boat way up the river, and tie it up here, and then when the moon was nice and big and full, we'd sneak up here, and we could float down the river. Well, down below, where all of the houses are, there was a bad rapids. Dad always warned all of

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us to keep away from there because it was dangerous, and if a boat got in there, we wouldn't be able to handle it or anything of that sort.

Well, we had a lot of new songs, and we sneaked out after everybody was in bed, that would be ten o'clock. Everybody was in bed by ten o'clock. And we sneaked out and we came up here, and we undid our boat, and started down the river, and we sang all these songs. Oh, we had such a romantic time, it was wonderful. I was about fourteen and this kid was about fifteen. We went off down the river, and we watched the moon rise higher and higher over the mountain, and all that, and the first thing we knew, the boat began to jump like the devil was after it. You just can't imagine anything like it, the way it was throwing from side to side and everything of that sort, and we realized we were down in this rapids where Dad had told us never, never to go, how dangerous it was.

Well, when we got through that rapids, and how we got through it I don't know, but when we got through the rapids, we came to shore and we tied up the boat and we dropped on the sand, and I'll tell you, I thought I never wanted to get up again. I was so worn out and tired. Well, anyway, we finally came on up home, and we had to pull the boat up home, because if Mother'd caught the boat away from there... Ordinarily a kid could leave it there and go back and get it the next day, but we knew that Mother would be suspicious of us if the boat was missing, and so on and so forth, so we pulled the boat back up, and when we got the boat tied up, and it was beginning to get daylight, we saw smoke coming out of the kitchen stovepipe, and we went down there and Ellen was the only one up.

Ellen was the hired girl. She was six feet tall, and a big, beautiful, sweet lump of sweetness. We just loved her to death. And I said, "Ellen, are you going to tell Mother on us for being out all night?" And she said, "Honey, you know I wouldn't think of such a thing."

N: Oh, bless her heart. I'll bet you were worn out.

S: And that's another memory. I've done things with her kids and her grandchildren through the years that I wouldn't do for anyone else, just because I loved her so much.

N: Well, no wonder. Well, I'll bet you were worn out, weren't you? You had to pull it up past the rapids, back up to the house.

S: Yes, we did. Well, the rapids weren't so bad, at the shore, so we could pull it say, five feet out, or something like that.

END OF SEGMENT

S: Mother dressed the baby in his prettiest little clothes, and Dad took some lumber that he'd been saving to make the cupboards with, and made the baby a coffin. My oldest brother, who was old enough to remember, said that the man went along with them, his name was Boren, and that he sat on the coffin, and my brother wanted to kill him. He just wanted to beat him up, he just wanted to mutilate him because he sat on that little coffin. He said he didn't dare do anything about it because it seemed to be such a solemn occasion, but he meant that. After that, he'd always remember that, and anyway, it wasn't long after that, that Mr. and Mrs. Boren came over

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just to visit and stay all night. They had a baby girl. They had a two-story house at that time. That was the first one that Dad built here. Mother had run upstairs to get the baby, and started taking him down. It was kind of cool weather. She thought she would take the baby down and get him dressed and she said the minute she picked the baby up, she knew the baby was dead. And they – she said to the mother of the baby, “Well, was there something the matter with the baby?” And the mother came over and...

END OF TAPE.